

# Writing Across the Spectrum

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Over the course of this first year of my term as editor of *American Archivist*, it has struck me time and again that archivists are writing across the full spectrum of our profession and are even shifting the spectrum as we write. I consider the articles that appear in our journal as separate components in the continuum of our professional literature. Articles stand on their own but are a unified whole, interrelated (borrowing from Eastwood) with the stream of writing that has come before and that will come after. Each issue of the journal provides a shifting snapshot of different areas of professional concern. Authors, peer reviewers, Editorial Board members, and editors stand in the stream and clear the barriers to help move our professional literature forward. In so many conversations, it's made clear to me that we are a profession that creates its own literature; and this literature grows, expands, changes, and adjusts based on our new explorations of theory and practice. We create the very spectrum that we write.

The new contributions that we are seeing, that you are writing, are evidence of shifts in the spectrum. These articles speak to me of the diversity not only of our contributors but of topics that currently engage us as professionals. This shift defies what might be a typical contextual consideration of each article, piece by piece. Included in this issue are wonderful contributions about our practice with considerations of digital processing, linked data, and implementing social media, and how a borrowed concept of technical debt has an impact on our practice. This issue explores collecting policies in collections as diverse as congressional archives and local music collections. We are treated to a fascinating exploration of the influence of American archivists on German practice. Each of these articles about practice brings us new ideas and moves our literature forward.

But we're also seeing authors dive into areas that are more personal and less easily quantified. Two articles in this issue begin what I expect to be a long conversation about the impact of COVID-19 on our professional lives. In that context, Ferrin Evans's Pease Award-winning article, "Love (and Loss) in the Time of COVID-19: Translating Trauma into an Archive of Embodied Immediacy," makes an observation that I think is apparent across many of the other articles in this issue. Evans writes, "I argue that the affective containers of archivists' own lives are porous," that our lives and our work mesh, and "that archivists' lives are just as worthy of consideration as the records upon which we focus" (Evans, p. 18). This reflectiveness, this recognition of the emotional side of our work and how we engage it, speaks to our desire to shift our literature. In this issue, we see archivists as translators, with Scott Cline echoing Evans in his statement that archivists have an obligation "to document themselves and their own complex contexts as a form of transparency and accountability in the archival endeavor" (Cline, p. 127). We hear throughout this issue a call for archivists to explore our representations—as well as our professional responses to those representations—with the introduction of the concept of "representational subversion" (Gabiola et al., p. 81), as well as a consideration of how archivists must be committed to "reciprocity as an archival responsibility," a force for creating change through community-based partnerships (Punzalan and Marsh, p. 30). Our personal responsibility as archivists is reflected in Rachel Vagt's Presidential Address from SAA's 2021 Annual Meeting, which focuses on "radical welcome," asking us to reconsider our practices that might be exclusionary. This is echoed by Abney, Denison, Tanguay, and Ganz, who provide a crucial look at practice in the workplace for individuals with invisible disabilities, stressing that through normalization of disabilities and accommodations, "many of the micro- or macro-aggressions may be eliminated from the workplace, as it can help remove the stigma surrounding disability" (Abney et al., p. 88).

*American Archivist* has been at the forefront of archival theory and practice for decades, and a consideration of the whole of our literature often foreshadows our current conversations. But, I will say that pulling together this issue has been a profound experience, and that is because of the willingness of each author represented here to step into the stream of the conversation and to shift the spectrum. Reading this content (many times over!), I can only say that, readers, we are gifted. Read this issue, and you will find an extremely creative and valuable professional dialogue that shows in multiple ways how we move our practice forward; what is more, our professional dialogue expects us to consider how we can be responsible to each other, how we can improve our world, and how we can honor the people and the history that we work with every day. We create our own literature. Thanks to every one of you for your work and participation, writing across the spectrum. I can't wait to see what comes next.